



Geoskills Plus Final Conference

The final event of the GeoSkills Plus project took place on 17th September 2015 at the House of European Surveyors and Geoinformation in Brussels, Belgium. Organised by the Council of European Surveyors and the Ordre Belge des Géomètres-Experts asbl in cooperation with the partners of this Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project, the conference discussed the situation regarding geospatial careers, skills and education in Europe.

Karl Donnert and Jean-Yves Pirlot



CLGE President Maurice Barbieri signs the Brussels GeoSkillsPlus Declaration

38

The conference hosted a keynote presentation by João Santos, Head of Unit of the Directorate General for Employment, Social affairs and Inclusion at the European Commission, entitled Medium and Long Term EU “Vocational Education and Training policy” priorities. It was a very interesting presentation, paving the way for other possible projects in the field of Sector Skill Alliances. Sector Skills Alliances aim at tackling skills gaps; enhancing the responsiveness of initial and continuing Vocational Education and Teaching systems to sector-specific labour market needs and responding to the demand for new skills with regard to one or more occupational profiles.

These objectives will be achieved by:

- Modernising Vocational Education and Training and exploiting its potential to drive economic development and innovation, notably at local and regional levels, thus increasing the competitiveness of the sectors concerned.
- Strengthening the exchange of knowledge and practice between vocational education and training institutions and the labour market by integrating work-based learning.
- Facilitating labour mobility, mutual trust and increased recognition of qualifications at European level within the sectors concerned.

The Final GeoSkills Plus Conference also included a special session on

geoskills in Belgium. Representatives of all the components of the “golden pyramid” – academics, public authorities, business sector, professional associations – offered an overview of the quantitative and qualitative gaps affecting the geospatial market and other issues that affect this sector.

It was very worthwhile to unite all these players in an official and structural way. Most of the time, the same kind of issues are discussed in informal ways. Unfortunately, it is often the case that during these sort of occasions even important breakthroughs typically reach no concrete resolution. In conclusion, it was decided to go on with the discussions during the forthcoming BeGeo event, in March 2016.

The conference participants were invited to sign the Brussels Declaration on GeoSkills in Europe; a document that makes a series of recommendations for establishing a spatially enabled society and meeting the growing needs for “geoskills” at national and European level.

About GeoSkills Plus

Under the Digital Agenda for Europe, the European Commission has identified the need for 21st Century e-skills as a key determinant for the future growth and development of the European economy. The European market has to deal with a range of specific e-skills shortages, gaps and mismatches. The GeoSkills Plus Project created opportunities to address the quantitative and qualitative gaps in relation to the demand of Geospatial specialist and to offer solutions to bridge the gaps.

The main outcomes of the project include:

1. a cooperation model to be used across the geospatial marketplace,
2. strategies for raising awareness of the subject and approaches for solving the mismatch between the market requirements on labour force and the numbers of students provided by the geospatial vocational education and training institutions and
3. the identification of ways to bridge the gaps that exist in the geospatial market, which currently prevent the system from working properly.

The GeoSkills Plus project is a Transfer of Innovation Project funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission. The House of the European Surveyor and Geoinformation is located at 76 Rue de Nord, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.



From left to right: Eric Bayers (Associations), Tanguy de Lestré (Labour market), Kris Lentacker (Government), Rolan Billen (Academics) and Eric Auquière (Government)

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www.geoskillsplus.eu, Twitter: @GeoskillsPlus and Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/1484458188448204

The final declaration was not only signed by major participating associations, but also by many individual participants attending the conference. The full text of the Declaration can be read [here](#).

Thursday 17th September 2015, Brussels Manifesto on GeoSkills in Europe

The GeoSkills Plus Project has developed a platform that can be used to improve skills for geospatial vocational education and training in Europe and encourage cooperation between the geospatial academic domain and the world of work.

The GeoSkills methodology was developed and used to identify and analyse key factors responsible for the mismatches in education, training and employment in Belgium, Bulgaria, Lithuania and The Netherlands.

The final meeting of GeoSkills Plus demonstrated the methodology that was developed to define the gap between key players in the geospatial sector within a country.

Results on how to establish a golden pyramid at national and regional level have been presented. For future success, one of the key elements identified is to create a solid foundation for the pyramid.

GeoSkills Plus has produced an overview of the opportunities for aware-

ness raising activities that countries might use in their efforts to raise awareness about the importance of 'geoskills'.

Recommendations

In order to establish a spatially enabled society and meet growing needs for 'geoskills' at national and European level, we make the following recommendations:

Measures to monitor, identify and address the qualitative and quantitative gaps in the geospatial labour market in all European countries should be a European priority to be developed, supported and resourced.

In order to exchange strategies and best practices between countries and associations, raise awareness of the relevance and importance of geospatial education in Europe, and the need to recognise surveying and geocareers.

Resources must be provided to encourage joint cooperation between all levels of education, government, the labour market and professional associations.



The End of an Era and a New Beginning for Geomatics in Ireland

The merger of the Society of Chartered Surveyors, Ireland with the Irish Institute of Surveyors is now a fact and heralds a new beginning for the Geomatics Sector in Ireland.

Muiris de Buitléir

40

For many years there were two professional bodies representing surveyors in Ireland. The older of the two institutions, The Society of Chartered Surveyors, Ireland had a very strong representation amongst quantity surveyors, building surveyors and other similar construction oriented branches of the profession, whilst the more recently established of the two institutions, The Irish Institution of Surveyors, was exclusively representative of geodetic surveyors. In recent years integrations took place between the SCSl and various other surveying institutions, particularly property management surveyors, resulting in a society with a membership of over 5,000 representing practically every branch of the surveying profession in Ireland.

Some two years ago, a number of members of the small geomatics professional group within SCSl, put forward the idea, during informal encounters with members of the council of IIS, that there might be considerable merit in exploring the possibility of a merging of the membership of the two institutions to the mutual benefit of all members. IIS saw advantage in the suggestion and a more formal process of discussion and negotiation was embarked upon. This continued over a period of two years, until finally, after many vicissitudes, an agreement, mutually acceptable to all parties, was reached. The process reached its culmination in late June of this year with the signing of an asset transfer agreement between IIS and SCSl, which allowed for the transfer of all existing members of IIS to SCSl, with agreed levels of membership grade, and the wind-down and disbandment of IIS as an institution.

This event marks a new dawn in the representation of geomatics surveyors in Ireland. For the first time all practitioners are members of a single, strong institution. No longer alone are the geomaticists united, but they share an institutional body with the



The Irish Institute of Surveyors was well represented at CLGE. Here you can see its successive Presidents. Back row left to right: Paul Burke, Brendan Sweeney, Eugene McGovern, Paddy Prendergast; Front row: Mike Flynn, John Dixon, Muiris de Buitléir, Paul Corrigan.

full range of other surveying disciplines providing a synergy and degree on interaction, that never existed before. The strength and comprehensive coverage of SCSl allow it to speak with a powerful and coherent voice, particularly to government and other representative bodies, on all matters that concern surveyors and surveying.

IIS members are justly proud of what they have achieved over the years. IIS was in existence for exactly 25 years, and during that time represented geodetic surveyors in Ireland on the councils and committees of CLGE and also, jointly with SCSl, on FIG. A great deal of good work was achieved, including the production and publication of many key papers on aspects of surveying in Irish life, the most important of which were the papers dealing with boundary issues in land registration. IIS, given its small size, also punched above its weight in its contribution to CLGE. Paddy Prendergast and subsequent presidents were enthusiastic participants in European surveying affairs. Many of those from other European countries, who were active in CLGE affairs over the years will know Paddy, as he was the primary Irish representative, both as secre-

tary or president of IIS, during the early years of IIS and CLGE.

IIS started in a very small way, with eight members and grew over the years to an impressive 540 members; at its highest point, representing practically the entire geomatics profession in Ireland. Our membership now look forward to their new future with SCSl. We have every confidence that geomatics will grow and prosper in its new home and that the influx of new and active members to SCSl will guarantee a geomatics community that will be vibrant and ambitious. In both the Irish and European spheres there are a great many issues where surveyors can play a beneficial and constructive role. It is my earnest hope that the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland will play such a role and that the profession of surveying will advance to the benefit of the practitioners and to the benefit of their clients who stand to gain so much from the application of the surveyors professional expertise, not to mention the government and administrative agencies in which surveying plays such a key operational part.

The constant advances in technology opens up limitless opportunities in surveying and its related disciplines. It is up to us, as members of the profession, to identify these opportunities and to develop them for the benefit of all. Surveyors have a unique set of skills and qualifications which allow them to engage in such projects and bring them to fruition especially when such knowledge and expertise is supported by a high level of ethical and professional behaviour. Of course, we should not forget the long standing focus of geomatics surveying, over the years, on cadastre, property registration and civil engineering. The new technologies also make possible advances and improvements in these traditional areas.